

Typical User - #1

User Group Data

Stick to the facts. Base everything on data, not assumptions. Skip opinions and avoid stereotypes.

Age

- Average 31 (typical applicant range)

Ethnicity

- German citizenship

Gender & Sex

- 75% male

Physical and Mental Abilities

- Educated

Social Background

- 60% Academic households

Financial Safety

- Secure financial situation

Data Sources

Source 1

https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bildung-Forschung-Kultur/Hochschulen/Publikationen/Downloads-Hochschulen/statistischer-bericht-promovierende-5213501247005.xlsx?__blob=publicationFile&v=4

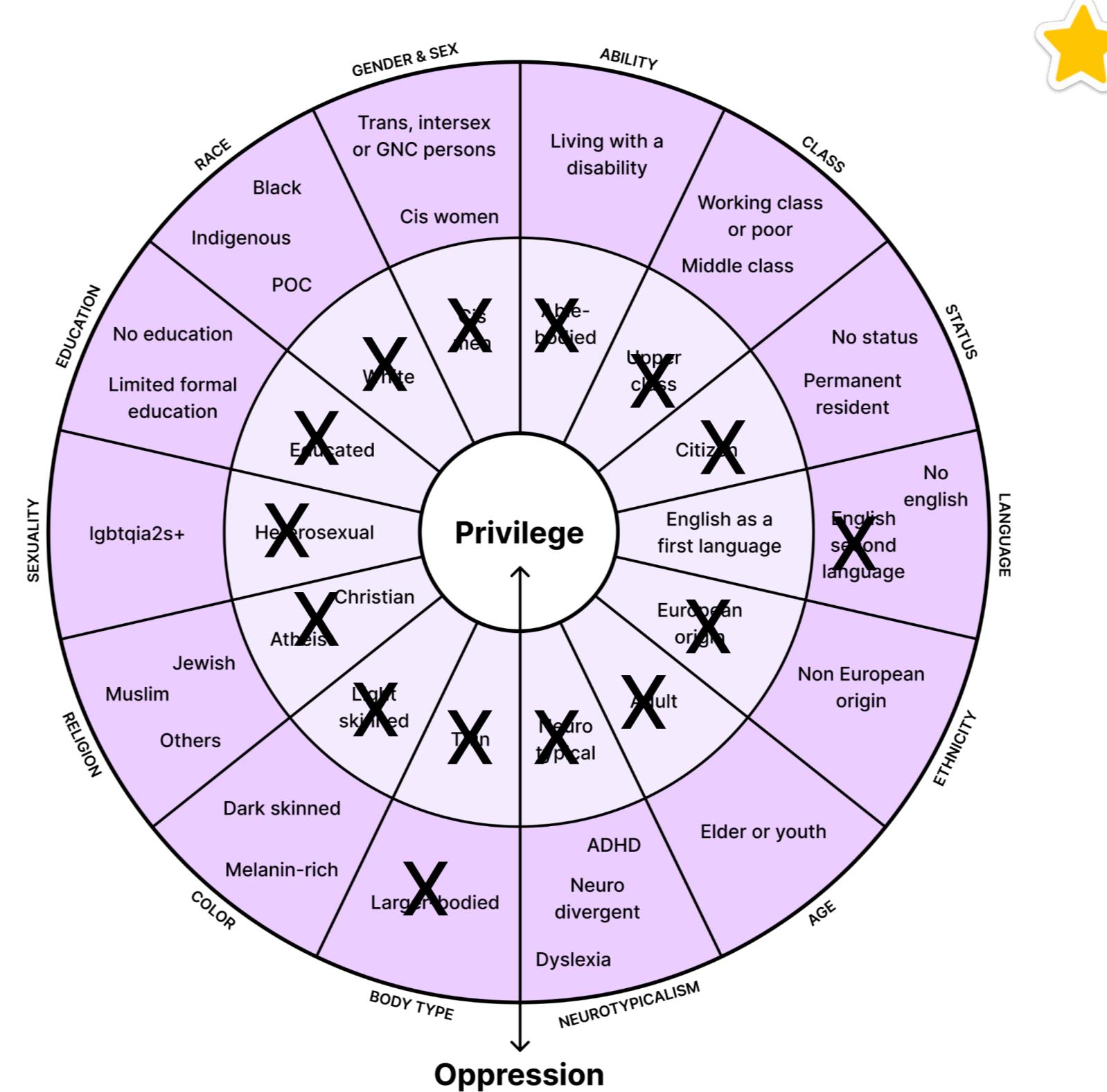
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Source 2

[First-Generation Academics further information](#)

Check Privilege

Critically reflect on the concrete privileges this group has (e.g., access to resources, influence on decisions, technical expertise). Stick to facts, not assumptions.



User Group Role

Describe this group's role in relation to the product. Focus on what they do or need (e.g., daily users, testers, decision-makers).

Applicant

Needs & Pains

Identify what this group needs or struggles with (e.g., access to information, ease of use, lack of time, technical barriers).

Gains

Describe this group's role in relation to the product. Focus on what they do or need (e.g., daily users, testers, decision-makers).

User Story

I want to apply for a doctoral candidate job.

First-Generation Academics - #2

User Group Data

Stick to the facts. Base everything on data, not assumptions. Skip opinions and avoid stereotypes.

Age

- Average 31 (typical applicant range)

Ethnicity

- German citizen

Gender & Sex

- All genders

Physical and Mental Abilities

- No specific assumption

Social Background

- Working-class / non-academic households

Financial Safety

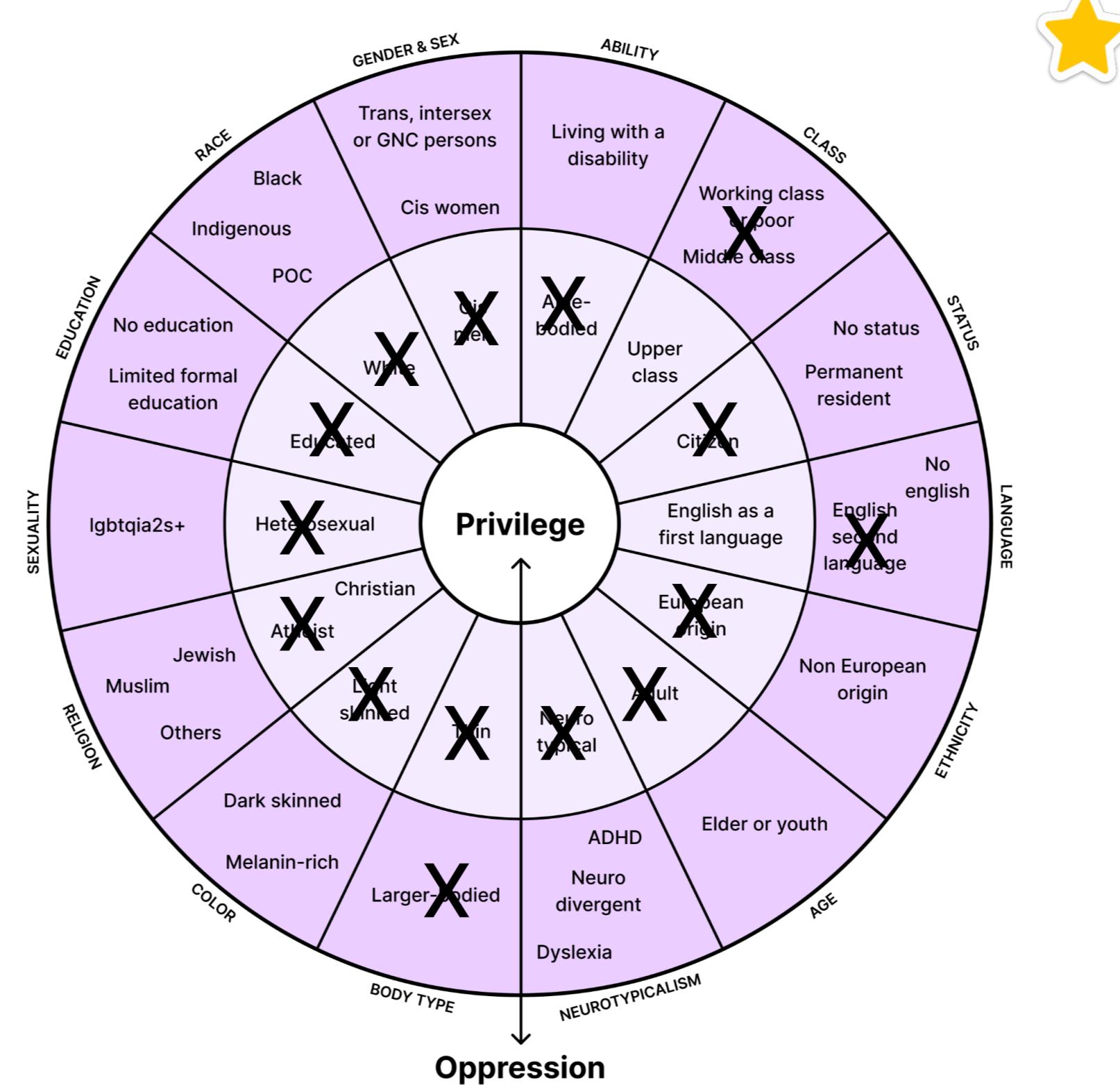
- Often limited, insecure or dependent on student jobs

Data Sources

Source 1
[First-Generation Academics_further information](#)

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User Group Role

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Applicant

Needs & Pains

Identify what this group needs or struggles with (e.g., access to information, ease of use, lack of time, technical barriers).

No insider knowledge	Unsure how to behave academically
Fear of doing something wrong	No networks

Gains

Describe this group's role in relation to the product. Focus on what they do or need (e.g., daily users, testers, decision-makers).

Clear explanations	Confidence
Equal footing	

User Story

As a first-gen applicant, I want clear explanations so that I can apply confidently.

Older Applicants / Career Changers / Care Takers - #3

User Group Data

Stick to the facts. Base everything on data, not assumptions. Skip opinions and avoid stereotypes.

Age

- 35-60

Ethnicity

- German citizen

Gender & Sex

- Male

Physical and Mental Abilities

- Age-related limitations possible (vision, cognition)
- Mental: higher risk of psychological risk but also reported wiser behaviour

Social Background

- Working class

Financial Safety

- Older PhDs tend to work part-time → loss of their full time job income can lead to financial problems
- Funding tends to go to early career PhDs

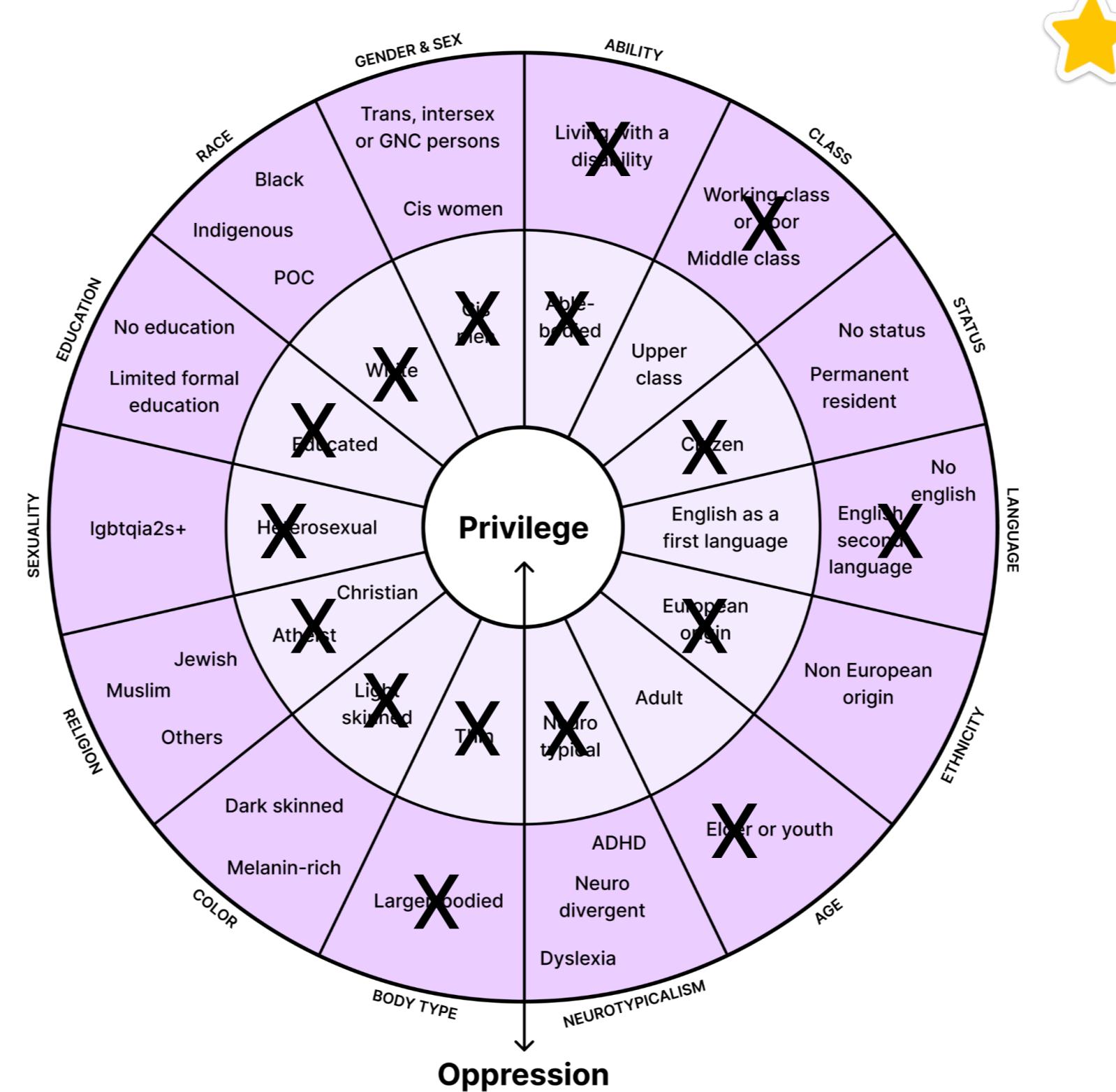
Data Sources

Source 1
[WP24_5.pdf](#)

Source 2
Universities continue to fail the non-traditional part-time mature PhD student - HEPI

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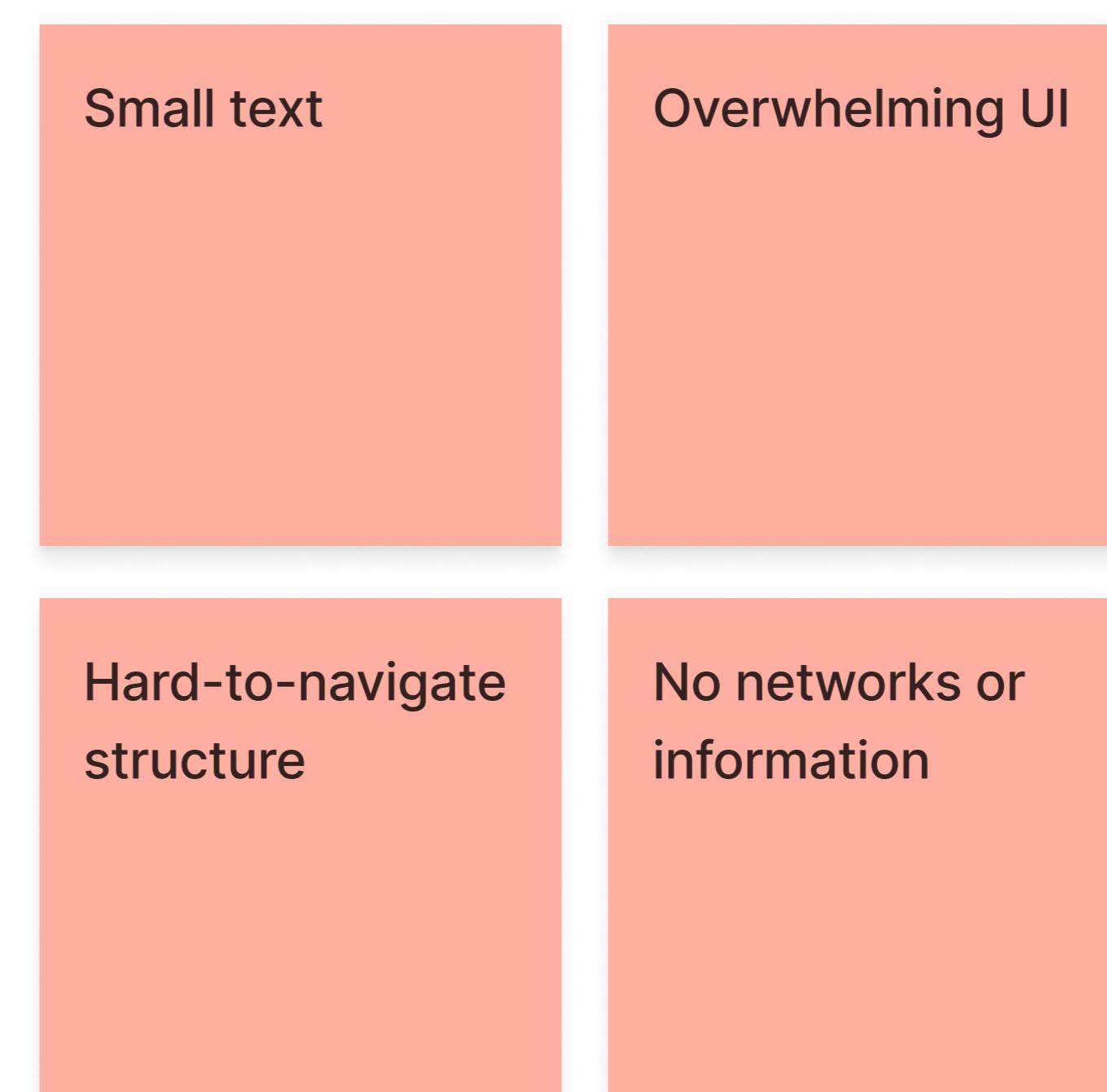
User Group Role

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Applicant

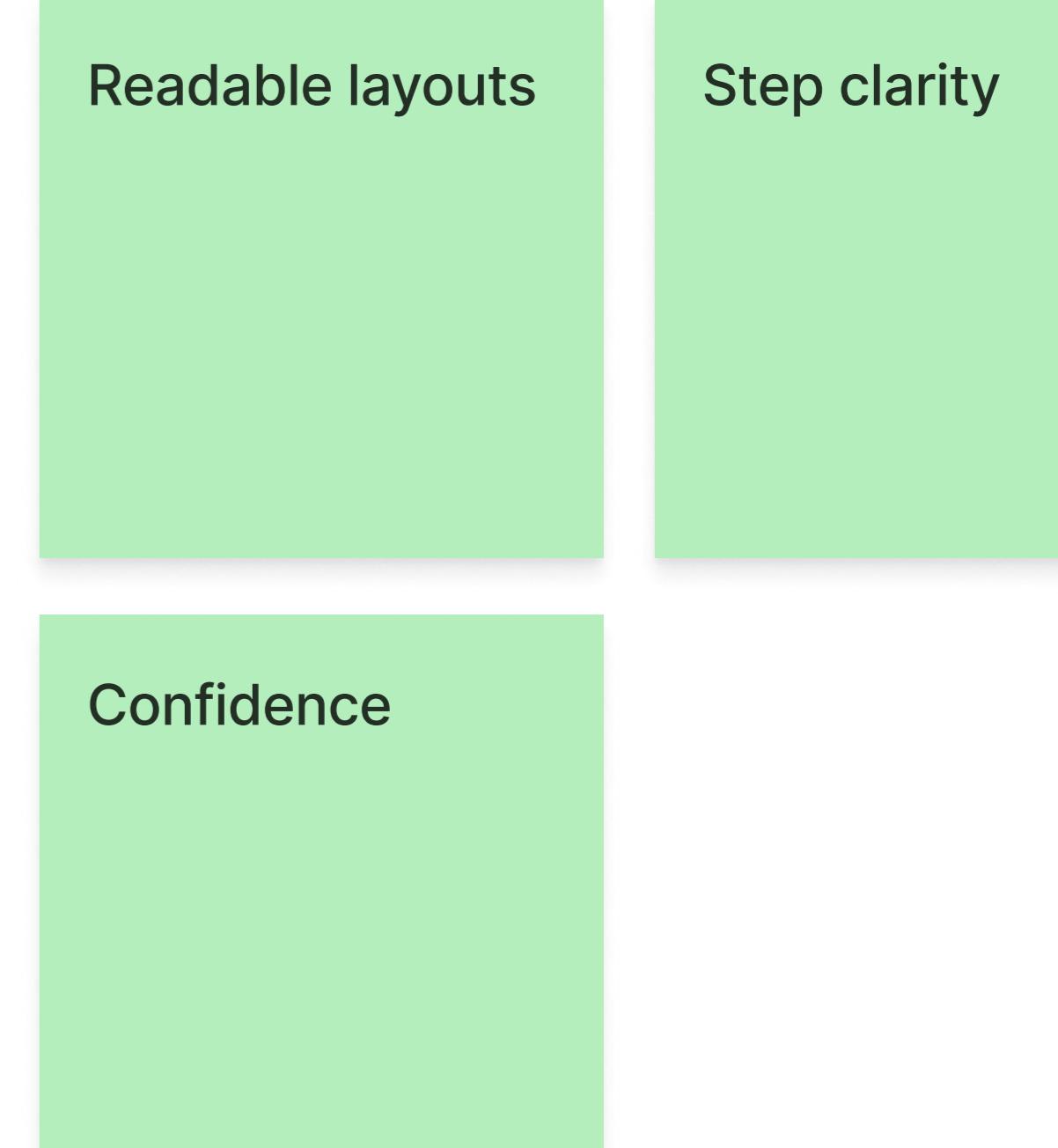
Needs & Pains

Identify what this group needs or struggles with (e.g., access to information, ease of use, lack of time, technical barriers).



Gains

Describe this group's role in relation to the product. Focus on what they do or need (e.g., daily users, testers, decision-makers).



User Story

As an older applicant, I want readable layouts so that I can apply easily and get the networks needed for PhD.

International Applicants - #4

User Group Data

Stick to the facts. Base everything on data, not assumptions. Skip opinions and avoid stereotypes.

Age

- Average 29

Ethnicity

- Non-European origin common

Gender & Sex

- Tend to be generally more female than male but for computer science in Germany it is more male (71,3%) than female

Physical and Mental Abilities

- Not significantly more stress than domestic → but less help seeking
- Language Barrier

Social Background

- Educated but can vary a lot depending your home country

Financial Safety

- Are from middle or upper class but due to high tuition and living cost real financial precarity can be faced
- Can vary individually

Data Sources

Source 1
[Socio-economic background of students](#)

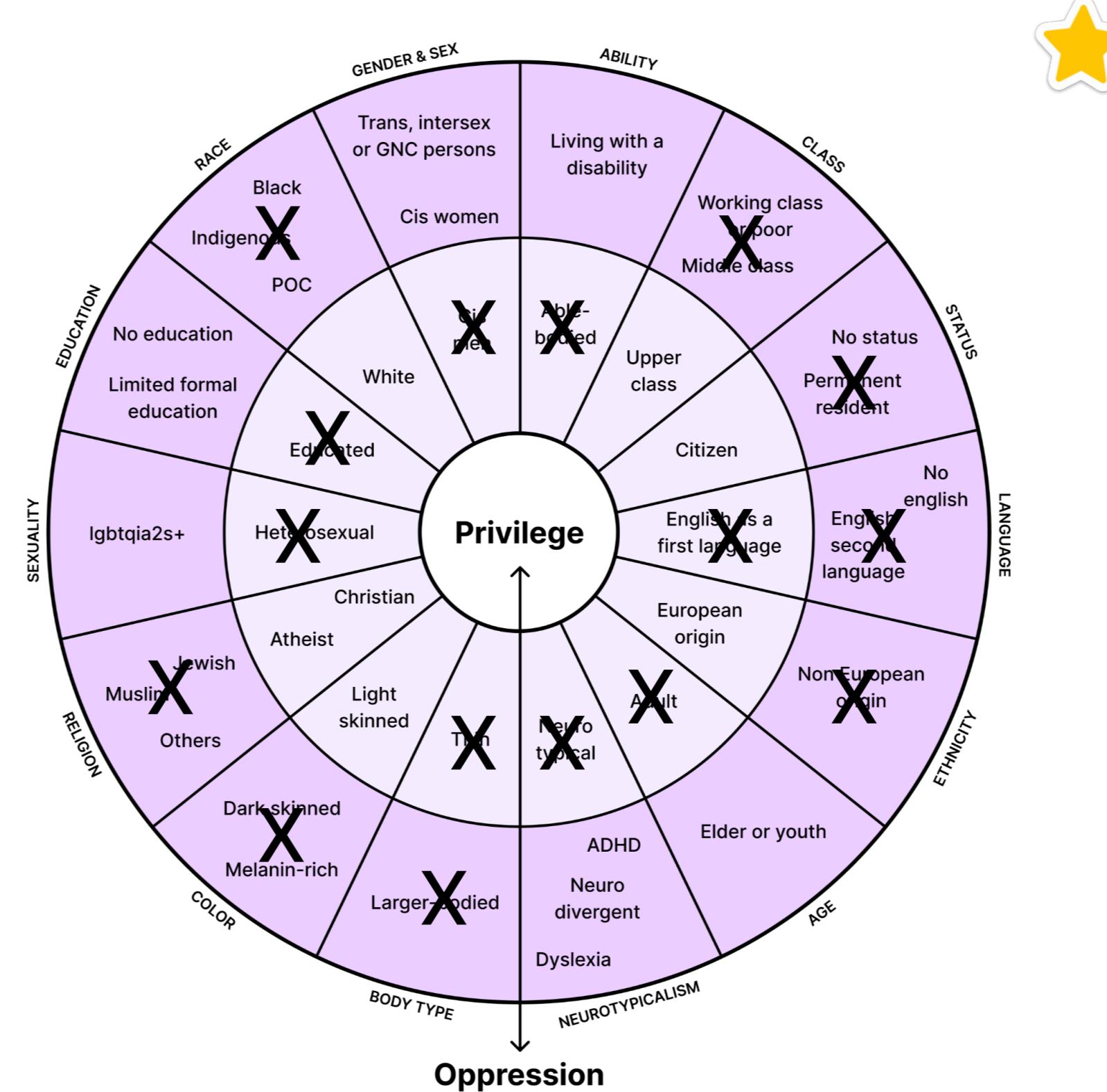
Source 2
[IJMHP | Promoting International Students' Mental Health Unmet Needs: An Integrative Review](#)

Source 3
[International Graduate Students' Mental Health Diagnoses, Challenges, and Support: A Descriptive Comparison to their Non-International Graduate Student Peers | Journal of International Students](#)

Source 4
[Destatis \(like typical User\) 21352-07](#)

Check Privilege

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Needs & Pains

Identify what this group needs or struggles with (e.g., access to information, ease of use, lack of time, technical barriers).

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Language barriers | Unclear bureaucratic steps |
| Cultural mismatch | Racism in application? |

User Group Role

Describe this group's role in relation to the product. Focus on what they do or need (e.g., daily users, testers, decision-makers).

Applicant

Gains

Describe this group's role in relation to the product. Focus on what they do or need (e.g., daily users, testers, decision-makers).

Understandable process

Translated steps

Trust in system

User Story

As an international applicant, I want translated and clear steps so that I can navigate the system.

Applicants with Migration Background / Non-Native German Speakers - #5

User Group Data

Stick to the facts. Base everything on data, not assumptions. Skip opinions and avoid stereotypes.

Age

- Average 31

Ethnicity

- Often non-European or mixed

Gender & Sex

- Male

Physical and Mental Abilities

- Unhappier than typical users

Social Background

- Often migrants or second-generation families

Financial Safety

- Financially not as secure as typical users

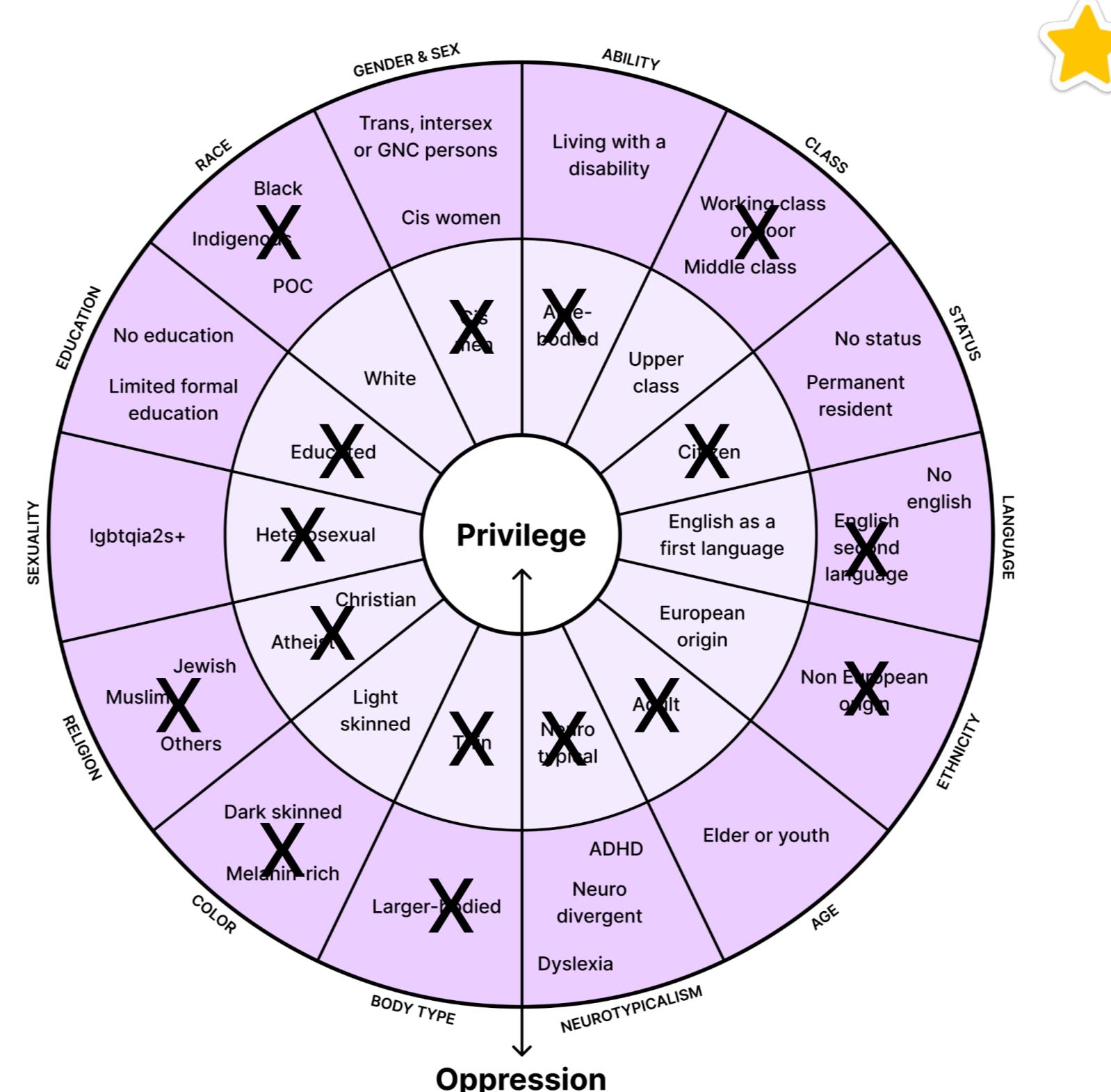
Data Sources

Source 1
[Nacaps](#)
[Datenportal](#) |
[DZHW](#)

Source 2
[Nacaps](#)
[Datenportal](#) |
[DZHW](#)

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User Group Role

Describe this group's role in relation to the product. Focus on what they do or need (e.g., daily users, testers, decision-makers).

Applicant

Needs & Pains

Identify what this group needs or struggles with (e.g., access to information, ease of use, lack of time, technical barriers).

Complex German or academic language

Fear of discrimination

Unclear nationality questions

Gains

Describe this group's role in relation to the product. Focus on what they do or need (e.g., daily users, testers, decision-makers).

Psychological safety

Clear, accessible language

User Story

As a non-native speaker, I want simple wording so that I feel safe applying.

Women / Non-Male Applicants in STEM - #6

User Group Data

Stick to the facts. Base everything on data, not assumptions. Skip opinions and avoid stereotypes.

Age

- Average 30

Ethnicity

- German citizenship

Gender & Sex

- Women, trans, non-binary (all non-male applicants) (21,3 %)

Physical and Mental Abilities

- Educated, able-bodied

Social Background

- 60% Academic households

Financial Safety

- Secure financial situation

Data Sources

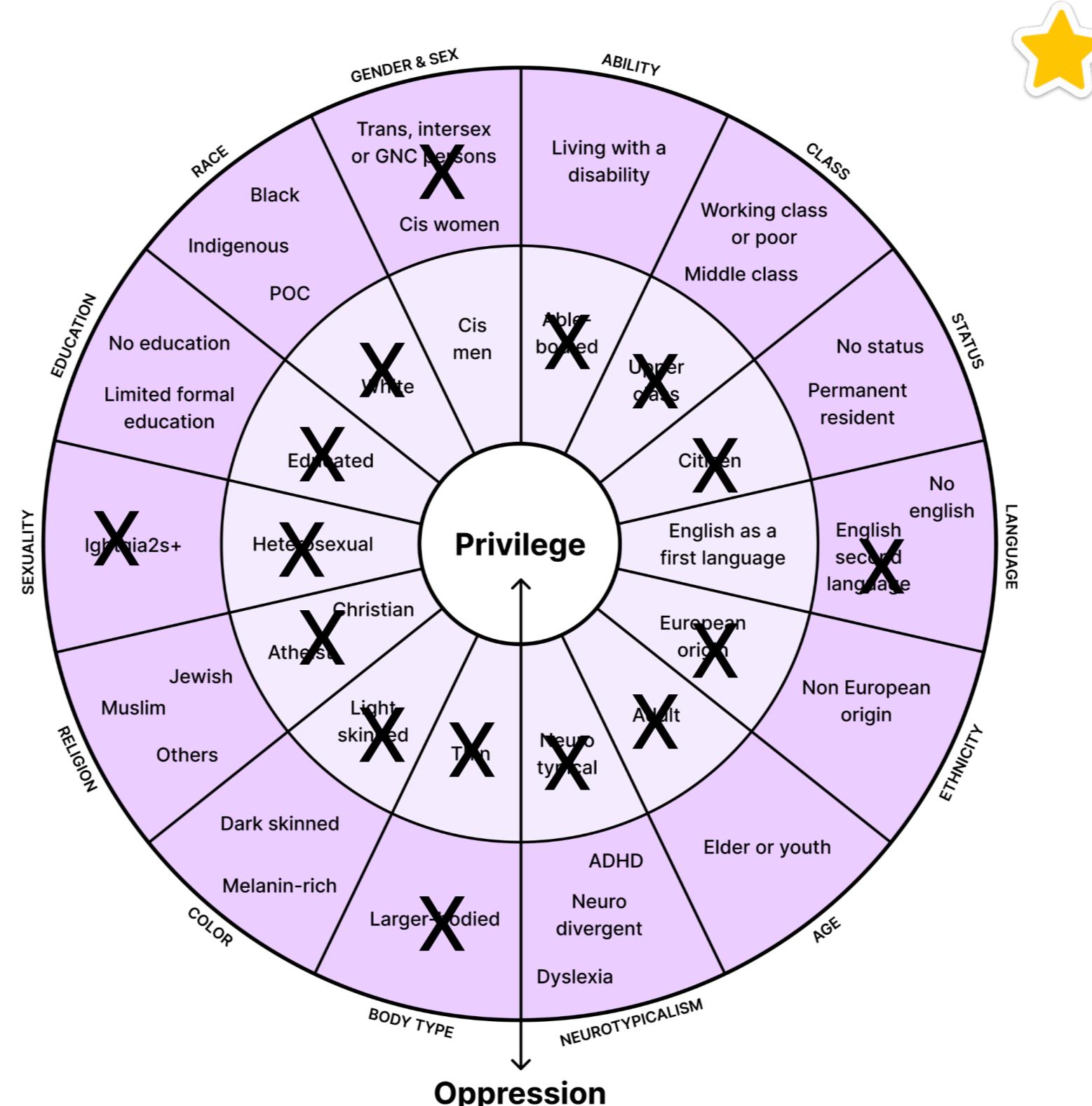
Source 1

https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bildung-Forschung-Kultur/Hochschulen/Publikationen/Downloads-Hochschulen/statistischer-bericht-promovierende-5213501247005.xlsx?__blob=publicationFile&v=4

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User Group Role

Describe this group's role in relation to the product. Focus on what they do or need (e.g., daily users, testers, decision-makers).

Applicant

Needs & Pains

Identify what this group needs or struggles with (e.g., access to information, ease of use, lack of time, technical barriers).

Fear of bias
Underrepresentation
Unsafe imagery

Gains

Describe this group's role in relation to the product. Focus on what they do or need (e.g., daily users, testers, decision-makers).

Fairness
Inclusive representation
Openness for women in CS

User Story

As a female applicant, I want visible fairness in the application system so that I feel welcome.

Applicants with Disabilities (visual, motor, cognitive) - #7

User Group Data

Stick to the facts. Base everything on data, not assumptions. Skip opinions and avoid stereotypes.

Age

- Average 31

Ethnicity

- German citizen

Gender & Sex

- Male

Physical and Mental Abilities

- Visual, motor, or cognitive disabilities

Social Background

- 60% Academic households

Financial Safety

- Secure financial situation

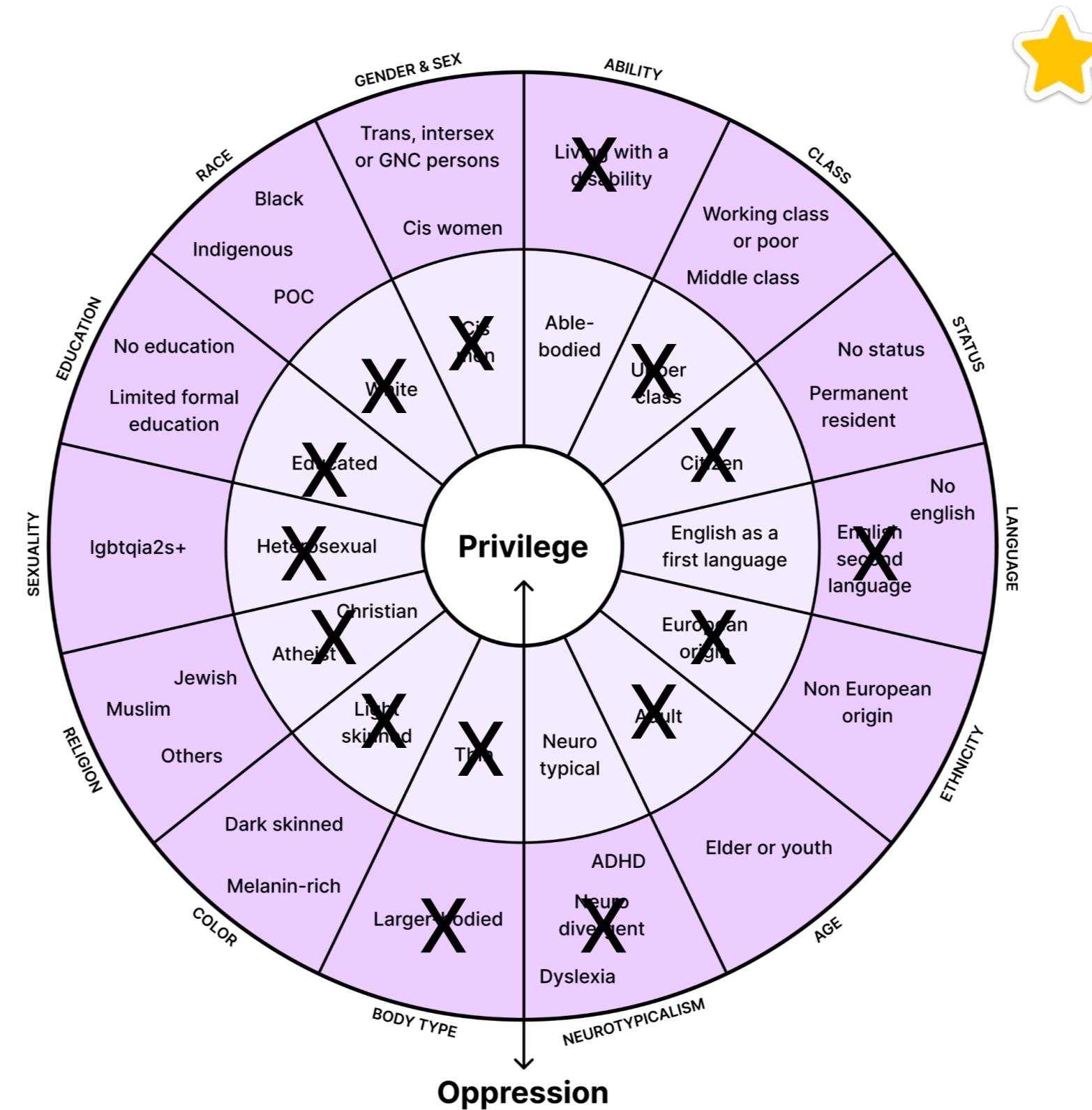
Data Sources

Source 1
[Wie Menschen mit Sehbehinderung deine Website nutzen](#)

Source 2
[Website barrierefrei machen: So gehen Sie vor | Aktion Mensch](#)

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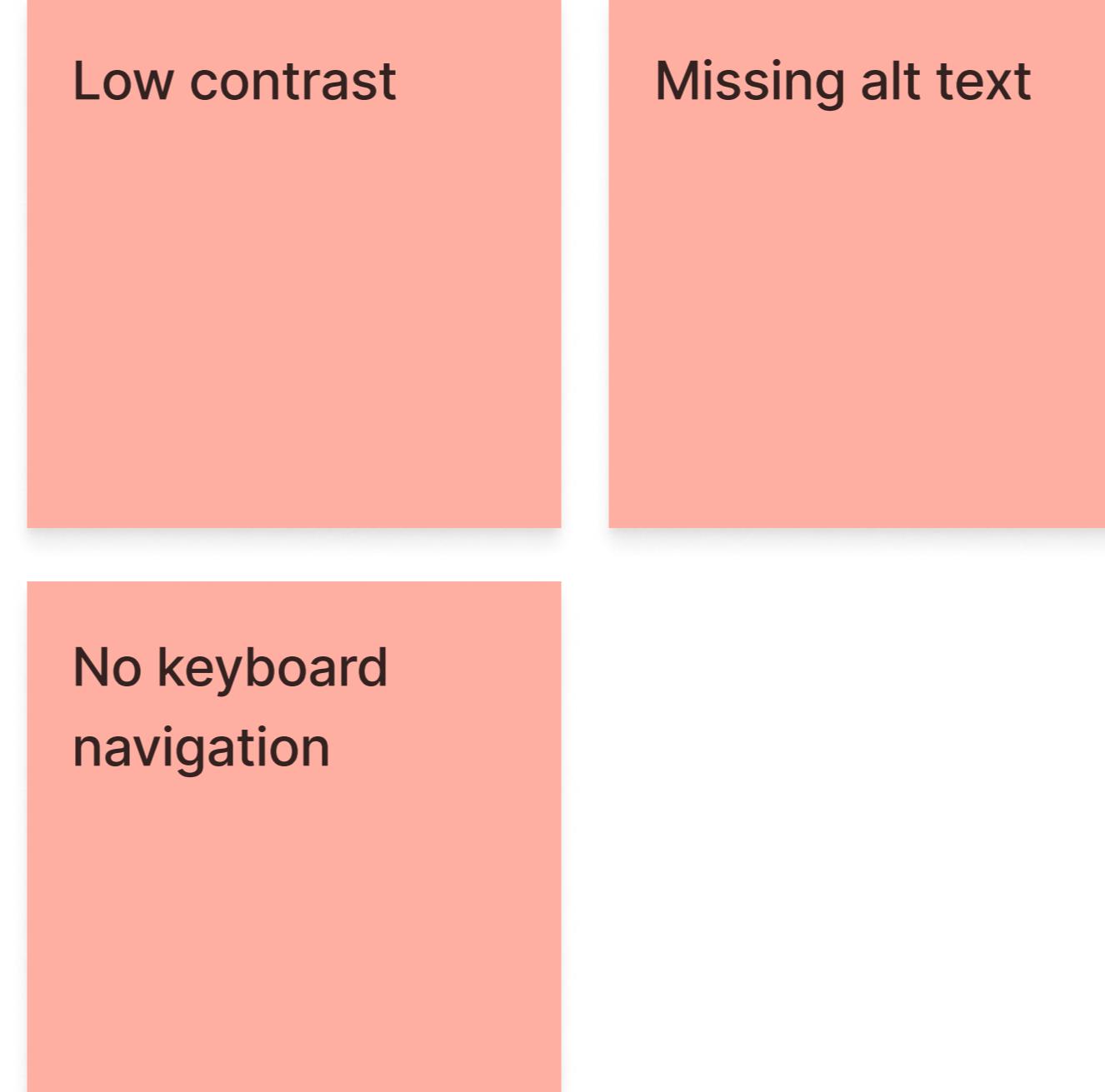
User Group Role

Describe this group's role in relation to the product. Focus on what they do or need (e.g., daily users, testers, decision-makers).

Applicant

Needs & Pains

Identify what this group needs or struggles with (e.g., access to information, ease of use, lack of time, technical barriers).



Gains

Describe this group's role in relation to the product. Focus on what they do or need (e.g., daily users, testers, decision-makers).

Accessible independent use

Dignity and equal participation

User Story

As a user with disabilities, I want accessible navigation so that I can apply without obstacles.

Professors / Hiring Staff - #8

User Group Data

Stick to the facts. Base everything on data, not assumptions. Skip opinions and avoid stereotypes.

Age

- Middle aged 50 - 60 (44%)

Ethnicity

- Mostly European (German Citizen 92%)

Gender & Sex

- 85% Men in CS

Physical and Mental Abilities

- Highly educated

Social Background

- Academic, high education

Financial Safety

- High (since they get W salaries)

Data Sources

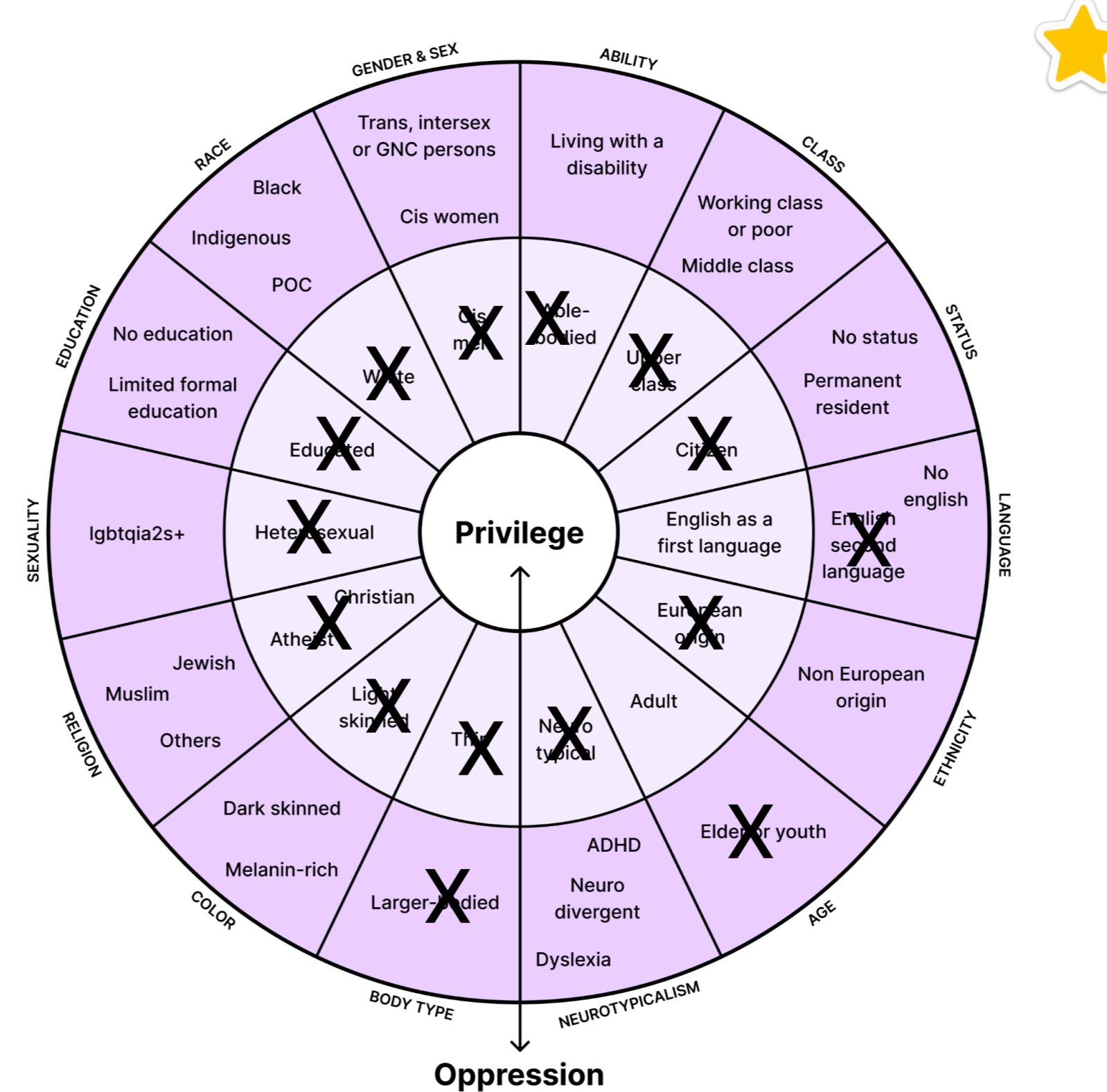
Source 1
[Hauptberufliches wissenschaftliches und künstlerisches Personal an Hochschulen: Deutschland, Jahre, Lehr- und Forschungsbereiche nach Fächergruppen, Geschlecht](#)

Source 2
[CHE Analyse zur Altersstruktur von Professor*innen](#)

Source 3
[Internationales Wissenschaftspersonal insgesamt sowie internationale Professor*innen nach Hochschulart 2018 und 2023 – Wissenschaftsweltoffen](#)

Check Privilege

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User Group Role

Describe this group's role in relation to the product. Focus on what they do or need (e.g., daily users, testers, decision-makers).

Professor

Needs & Pains

Identify what this group needs or struggles with (e.g., access to information, ease of use, lack of time, technical barriers).

Hard to compare applicants with each other

Risk of unintended bias while reviewing

Unclear UI

Gains

Describe this group's role in relation to the product. Focus on what they do or need (e.g., daily users, testers, decision-makers).

Structured data

Reduced bias

Clarity

User Story

As a professor, I want clear applicant data so that I can select responsibly.

Admin Staff / System Maintainers - #9

User Group Data

Stick to the facts. Base everything on data, not assumptions. Skip opinions and avoid stereotypes.

Age

- 25–60

Ethnicity

- Any

Gender & Sex

- Any

Physical and Mental Abilities

- Mixed

Social Background

- Middle class

Financial Safety

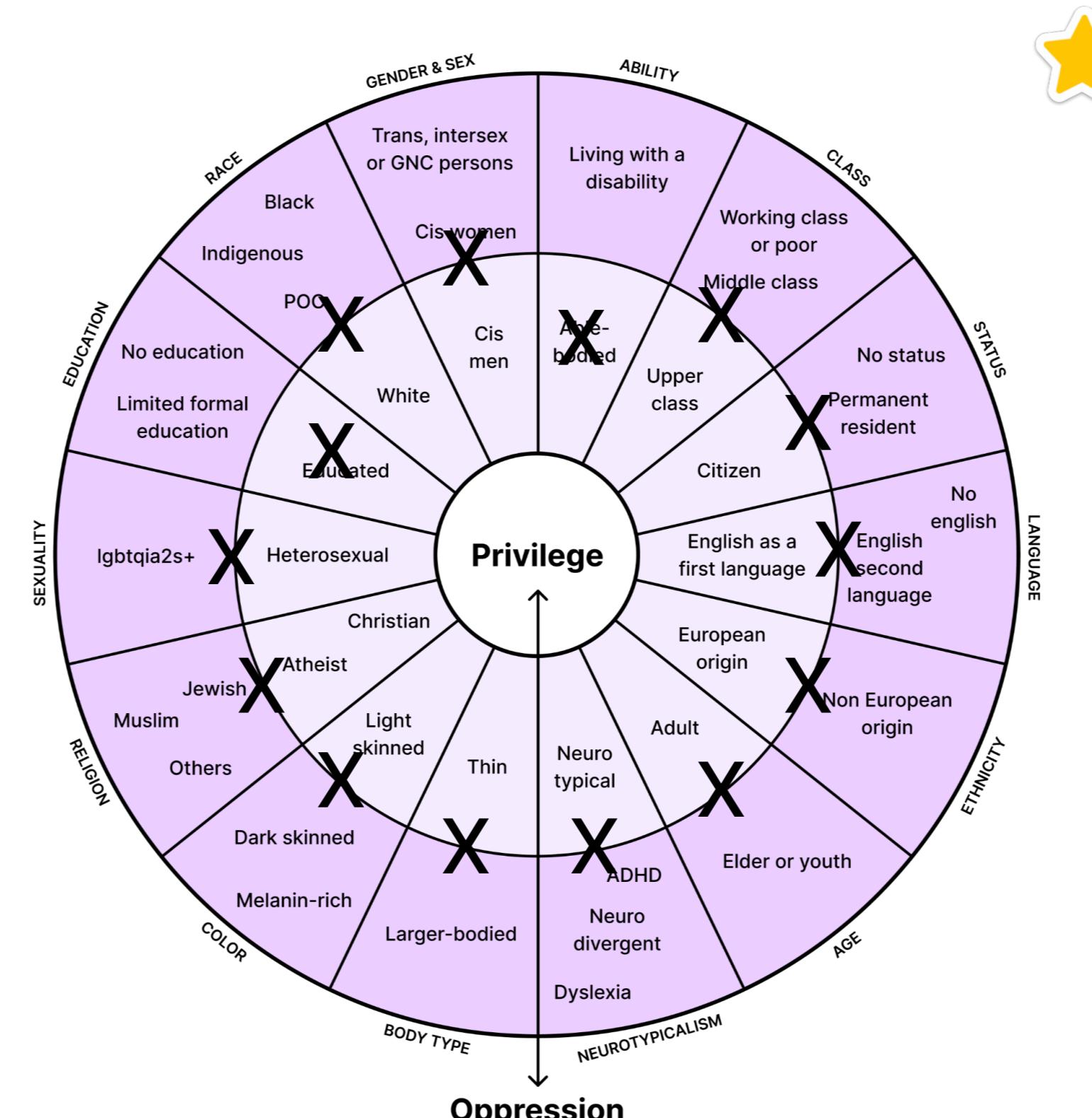
- Stable job

Data Sources

No Sources due to the fact that these will be workers for the system in development

Check Privilege

Critically reflect on the concrete privileges this group has (e.g., access to resources, influence on decisions, technical expertise). Stick to facts, not assumptions.



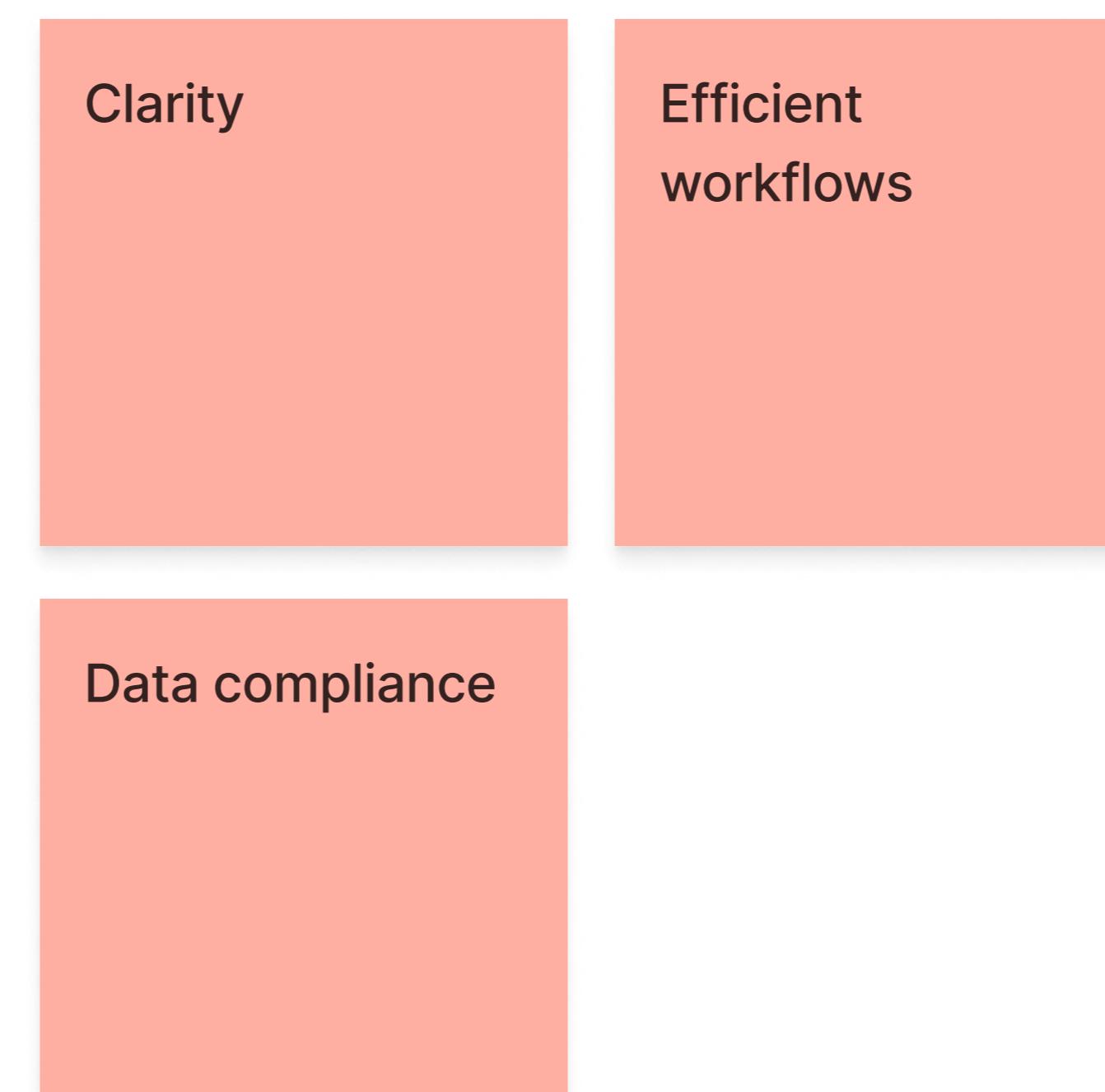
User Group Role

Describe this group's role in relation to the product. Focus on what they do or need (e.g., daily users, testers, decision-makers).

Admin

Needs & Pains

Identify what this group needs or struggles with (e.g., access to information, ease of use, lack of time, technical barriers).



Gains

Describe this group's role in relation to the product. Focus on what they do or need (e.g., daily users, testers, decision-makers).

Manageable system

Clear documentation

User Story

As an admin, I want clear data structures so that I can maintain the system reliably.

Reflection

Similarities

What similarities and differences do you notice among all user groups?

All users rely on clear, structured information.

Regardless of role, each group struggles when information is unclear, hidden, or incomplete.

All users are affected by systemic academic norms. Applicants, professors, and admin staff all operate within a system shaped by hierarchy, habitus, and expectations, but experience it very differently.

Exclusion

Are there user groups who are excluded or underrepresented?

Applicants face the highest exclusion risk. Especially first-gen, international, disabled, or migrant-background applicants.

The process reflects academic privilege they may not have.

Impact on design

How might this impact the design of your product?

The design must prioritize applicant accessibility and fairness due to applicants facing the most barriers, the platform must reduce cognitive load, hidden rules, bias, and accessibility issues

Different user groups require different modes:

- Professors need structured, bias-aware reviewing tools
- Admins need workflow clarity and standardized submissions
- Applicants need guidance and a transparent experience